



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Vicksburg District

# THE Water's Edge TEAMWORK

Winter 2009



**District Support to New Orleans**

**FEST-M Team joins  
Mississippi Valley Division**

# THE Water's Edge

Winter 2009

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**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**

News magazine of the  
Vicksburg District  
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers

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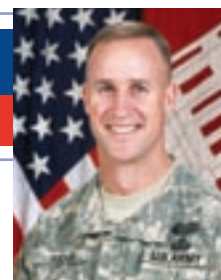
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*The Hurricane Gustav Recon Team waits outside the Gulfport airport for a Blackhawk to do an aerial recon for roofing mission. Pictured left to right are, Col Wehr, Lamar Jenkins, Greg Bertoglio, St. Louis District, Gov. Haley Barbour, Greg Williams, Vick James, St. Louis District, Mike McNair, Bill Latham, and Jasper Lummus.*

## District Engineer's Corner

with Col. Michael C. Wehr



# To Teammates of the Vicksburg District...

## New Challenges - The Opportunities

Each New Year brings new challenges and each new challenge brings new opportunities. This year, 2009, is no different, looking ahead we face deadlines and commitments, but also tremendous opportunities to reinforce our value to the Nation.

In New Orleans we see the realization of regionalization. While we already have regional rates to track obligations and expenditures, we now face the regional challenge of how does the Mississippi Valley Division leverage all of the Districts to accomplish the Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System by 2011? Completing the HSDRRS by the deadline is the #1 priority of the Division. From now until June of 2011 we will concentrate on efficiently and effectively focusing the region's resources on project delivery.

To help keep us focused on that goal, each District has a "countdown clock" letting us know how much time is left before the deadline. Ours is in the front entrance to the district headquarters building.

Within that overall plan, our District has the responsibility for directly supporting projects within the HSDRRS 2011 mission (the tier 1a on the poster) and improving both the Federal and non-Federal levees within Plaquemines Parish. These levees are critical for residents of lower Plaquemines Parish to evacuate in case of a storm threat.

The Vicksburg District's mission is threefold: (1) Priority number 1 is to execute projects in New Orleans on schedule; (2) we also must execute our appropriated civil works mission within the Vicksburg District's

traditional boundaries, and (3) accomplish projects funded under the Federal Stimulus package. Each District Commander in MVD also has the direct responsibility and authority to accomplish their similar mission.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding for the Corps totals to \$2 billion for construction, \$2.075 billion for operations and maintenance, \$375 million for Mississippi River and Tributaries, \$25 million for regulatory, \$25 million for general investigations, and \$100 million for formerly utilized sites remedial action program.

That means a "draw up" of our workforce instead of a "draw down". In fact we're hiring right now. In the midst of the current economic woes the country is facing, the Vicksburg District is hiring dozens of new engineers, and filling other positions as well, and it doesn't stop there. The latest stimulus package may include more project funds for our District and the Division. I have full confidence we will meet this challenge as an opportunity to showcase our amazingly talented employees: the same workforce that responded to two floods and two hurricanes in the same year.

Make sure and spread the word to friends and family and former classmates that the Vicksburg District is actively hiring.

There is yet another challenge and opportunity this year that we are addressing via a regional response. MVD is now responsible for staffing Gulf Region North (GRN) in Iraq.



# Postcard from Iraq—The greatest challenge ever

BY DAPHNE MORRELL,  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT  
LAKE LANIER AND BUFORD DAM, MOBILE DISTRICT

This all started when my supervisor, Don Simpson from the Mobile District (who at the time was stationed at Gulf Region North) asked if I wanted another challenge. Don knew my background — that as a former military spouse I had traveled throughout the world during the past 19 years and had numerous family members also serving in the military. I had a definite interest in seeing new places, learning new things, and exploring new opportunities.

I said “Yes I would love to, and why not?” I had been pondering the idea of deploying for a while. It was definitely time for a change. I discussed it with the most important person in my life, my only child, daughter Tia. It was hard and she was scared due to the fact that her father, an uncle, and 4 cousins, had all served in Iraq. I also knew that a good friend of mine, Karen Johnson, from the Mobile District, was currently deployed.

When I was contacted by the S-1 office at Gulf Region South, the ball started rolling and I knew I did not want it to stop. As the Bible says “Ask and it shall be given.” I waited until the weekend of my departure to call my family and friends to drop the news that I was deploying to Iraq that Sunday. My family was not happy; they all know I am the one who is constantly challenging myself for a new adventure.

I had the experience of riding across the desert from Kuwait

to Tallil, Iraq. During that trip, I’ll admit I started having second thoughts about the whole deployment thing but realized it was too late then to turn around.

Two days later when I rode to Diwaniyah, Camp Echo, Iraq, I thought, you prayed for this... which meant “God brought you to this; He will bring you thru this.” I spent 17 months at the Forat Area Office in Camp Echo working closely with our Iraqi engineers and Iraqi contractors.

I have had the awesome opportunity of visiting various projects we’re managing, seeing the smiles and the genuine appreciation of the Iraqi people regarding our efforts to help them rebuild their country.

I came to the South District S-1 Office in June 07 until 15 Sept 08. It has truly been a blessing and an honor to have been part of this enormous mission. I will never forget the challenges that we faced and how we all came through this stronger, more humble, and with a completely renewed outlook on life. I will always treasure this gift. With the good has come the bad, and on 14 Oct 06, I lost a loving long-time close friend, 1SGT Charles Monroe King, killed by a roadside bomb in Baghdad. He was a great man and honorable soldier. I will love, cherish and honor him always.

Many courageous individuals have given their lives. They will all be missed and their sacrifice not forgotten. My tour in Iraq ended in September; we’re making a difference there, and I’m proud to have been a member of this great team.

## Volunteering for duty in Iraq People ask why we do it

BY JOHN CONNOR  
GULF REGION SOUTH DISTRICT

“People always ask why do we do it,” said Tonya Myrick, a District project manager who recently returned from service in Iraq with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“Why do we give up our comfortable lives to go to a place where the norm is a 7-day work week, 12 hours a day most days,” questioned the Mississippi native, who just completed her second Iraq tour.

Why indeed? As Myrick noted, the temperature can soar to 130 degrees or more in the summer in southern Iraq where she served, leaving one feeling like you are walking with a hair dryer pointed at you, and vicious dust storms can roar out of the desert without any warning.

Those are just the elements. There were innumerable other challenges during her 22 months in Iraq, including mortar and rocket attacks by insurgents, which are much rarer these days than when she first arrived.

“Why do we do it?” she asked. “I think for me the answer would be to give the Iraqis a chance for necessities that we take for granted—clean drinking water, electricity, drivable roads, and even a good education.

“I found it very rewarding to see a project go from start to completion in only a few months,” Myrick continued. “Don’t get me wrong, it takes a certain kind of personality to give up everything to go over there and endure the tough environmental and working conditions. But if you possess that personality, the rewards can be tremendous.”

### 4 THE WATER’S EDGE

Myrick hails from Vicksburg where she works with the standard permitting section of the Regulatory Branch. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree in biology from the University of Louisiana at Monroe, and a Master Degree in combined science (biology and chemistry) from Mississippi College in Clinton.

Myrick spent both of her Iraq tours with the Gulf Region South District which provides reconstruction services in the nine southern provinces of Iraq. She said there was “a huge difference between my tours -- both in job position and living conditions.”

Her first tour, in 2005, was spent as a project engineer at Camp Echo in Qadisiyah Province, with a staff of seven people in a small office building on what is mainly a Polish Army base. “We had nothing to start with -- no desks, no chairs, no paper, no ink pens,” she recalled. “Our hooches were the bare necessities” and “the nearest bathroom and shower were both a walk across the camp.”

“At Camp Echo, we were the ‘boots on the ground,’” Myrick recounted.



District employee, project manager Tonya Myrick sorts out donated toys for distribution to youngsters in southern Iraq.

Continued on page 8

## District plays major role in support to HSDRRS and New Orleans District

Photos by Alfred Dulaney



Fire rages as the city floods.

BY DAVID LONGMIRE,  
CONTRACT WRITER

In the fall of 2008, Brigadier General Michael J. Walsh issued the Commander's Intent, which directs how work is to be accomplished within the District within the next 30 months. This plan is in support of the Hurricane Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS) 100-year level of protection to be accomplished by June 2011.

The purpose is to work efficiently, effectively, and with excellence, focus resources of the entire region on the delivery of HSDRRS engineering products.

This will be accomplished through the team work of all District commanders working closely with the Commander of Mississippi Valley Division, for all assigned works within the District.

In response to this plan, Col Michael C. Wehr, Commander of the Vicksburg District, stated, "Vicksburg District will execute contracting and engineering services for the Hurricane Protec-

tion Office and other designated areas within established schedules in order to accomplish the regional mission of HSDRRS by June 2011.

"Simultaneously, the District executes engineering services during all phases of Plaquemines Parish by established schedules, while executing our Appropriated Civil Works mission and building technical competence into the next 20 years."

District engineers are playing a vital role in project design, planning and analysis, crucial to the project being completed on time. "Right now, this is the Corps' number one Civil Works mission in the Nation," said Sam Horton, area engineer of Greenwood Area Office. The \$15 billion project is progressing, but is still three years away from completion. "The schedule is to have all work critical to 100 year protection done by 2011," he said.

"There are other important features to the overall system that are being worked hard, but some, like the Plaquemines Parish work, may extend

a couple of years beyond that date."

To accomplish this feat, Horton said the emphasis on how the work is to be done has changed recently. The philosophy has shifted to a regional approach changing from an attitude of "them" to "we" when talking about the accountability for delivering the projects and getting this done "There is a lot of discussion going on now in assigning the work involved in the mission to make sure it is a regional task."

The efforts required of the Vicksburg District in supporting HSDRRS will push the District "way beyond the normal work load," he said. There is a mix of services that the District provides, he said, which involves developing plans and specs and engineering analysis in the areas of Hydraulics/Hydrology and Geotech.

"What we're doing has been working well as far as engineering support to the HPO as well as the New Orleans District," said Mike Turner, chief of technical support, engineering

*Continued on page 6*



**District Support**—Continued from page 5

and construction division. “The District has taken on a significant role in this civil works mission. A great deal of engineering design work is being done. HPO doesn’t have an engineering office, so we have been working in that capacity,” Turner said.

“The increased workload will allow the District to work towards another critical goal, to build our technical competency or “build our bench” for coming years. Engineering and construction division is planning to hire 20-30 engineers that can receive a once-in-a-lifetime training opportunity during the HSDRRS work,” stated Sam Horton, area engineer, Greenwood Area Office.

The Vicksburg District’s primary mission in supporting the New Orleans District involves the levees of Plaquemines Parish, a strip of land that extends southeast of New Orleans and surrounded by the Mississippi River and Gulf of Mexico taking in several small towns and communities and a large share of oil refineries.

“In Plaquemines Parish our focus is on raising the levees,” Horton said. The levees run from New Orleans all the way down to Venice, Louisiana. The District is providing engineering support to the Hurricane Protection Office in the enlargement of Federal levees and levees that were previously non-Federal. “The main problem we face is that this is a narrow strip of land at a low elevation with water on both sides,” he said.

Ben Caldwell, Vicksburg District’s Plaquemines Project technical manager for providing reach-back support for HPO for Plaquemines Parish, said the number one priority in Plaquemines Parish is restoring the levees to the authorized grade. This includes 80 miles of Federal levees and 34 miles of non-Federal levees. The levees are not as high as they used to be because of sediment consolidation and because of the fact that the entire area is sinking, he said.

The work in Plaquemines Parish is still in the early design phase, Horton

said, and there is plenty to be done by our engineering teams to get the work done on schedule. It is all a part of the pieces to the giant mission to accomplish hurricane and flood protection for the New Orleans area.

“It is in the infancy stage right now,” Caldwell said. The primary focus now involves writing scopes of work to get the levees designed, taking soil borings, and other preliminary tasks. “We are looking at the long-term solution,” he said.

As for Hurricane Gustav that tested the HSDRRS three years before the system was scheduled to be built to the 100-year level of protection, Caldwell and others at the District were relieved that the storm had passed 70 miles west of New Orleans. Corps engineers are working diligently on getting more project improvements completed before the summer 2009 hurricane season.

Rebuilding the flood protection system for New Orleans, La., and its surrounding parishes to withstand the 100-year flood was designated a national priority in the wake of devastation left by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Though the flood protection project is not scheduled for completion until 2011, the Corps’ work to date passed a

serious test on September 1, when category 2 Hurricane Gustav came ashore 70 miles southwest of New Orleans.

Corps hurricane response personnel in Vicksburg, Baton Rouge, La., and across the nation worked together to monitor Gustav and carry out necessary actions to protect the people and their property from flood waters. Three flood gates were closed and pumping. The pumps kept the canal water levels below the safe water elevations; the gates kept the Lake Pontchartrain surge from entering the canals; and the Sewerage and Water Board was able to operate its pumping stations unrestricted.

A portion of non-Federal levee in Plaquemines Parish breached, but the Corps was there to provide 400 sandbags to help fill the breach. After Gustav passed, Corps damage assessment teams were on the ground and also flew over the system to help determine additional repairs required due to Gustav.

“We had a test; we passed the test, but we haven’t finished yet, and there is still a lot of work to be done. Gustav, however, made us remember where our focus is as well as the importance of this mission,” Caldwell said.



**New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.**

## FEST M Team – Main joins Mississippi Valley Division

BY FRANK WORLEY, PAO

The Mississippi Valley Division is making history by filling a vital role in supporting the Army's Global War on Terror by forming a FEST-M team to provide specialized engineering support.

During FY08 the Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) was given the job of establishing one of the first of two permanent FEST-M teams. The Lakes and Rivers Division (LRD) is establishing the other team. As the teams develop and funding becomes available, positions will be advertised for permanent fill. Until that time, civilian volunteers are rising to meet the challenge.

A FEST-M provides specialized engineering support to an assigned military Engineer Brigade or Engineer Command. The FEST-M provides the foundation for this type of combat engineer organization as it transitions to an overseas operation.

The 579th Engineer Detachment will not be directly assigned to the 412th Engineer Command (ENCOM) though it will have an inherently close relationship with the ENCOM. The 412th Engineer Command is a Reserve Engineer Brigade based in Vicksburg.

The 579th is physically located at the Vicksburg District Headquarters building, with four newly assigned military members, which are CSM Harry L. Collins, MAJ Sean-Andre Powell, CPT Willie Hutchinson and SFC Robert L. Cook.

Maj. Sean Powell, one of the military members of the FEST-M team said that previously support teams were staffed by volunteers, but now headquarters has decided to make it a permanent detachment. The FEST-M team is ready to support any area that is in need of assistance immediately. This eliminates searching for volunteers to deploy.

The FEST-M that has been established under MVD operational control with host support from the Vicksburg District is the 579th Engineer Detachment. The 579th Engineer Detachment consists of 36 positions, 27 of which will be DA civilians. SFC Robert Cook said that there will eventually be nine military members ranging from Sgt. First Class to Colonel. The 579th will provide direct coordination to organizations, whether military or civilian.

"We will be supporting natural disasters even in other countries that need USACE support whether it is Iraq, Afghanistan, or a non-combat country," said Powell, one of the military members of the FEST-M team.

The civilian members of the team play an important role by offering their specialized skills, broad expertise, and continuity of service. Powell said that the civilians are needed as engineers, lawyers, contractors, and whatever is needed to support the areas that are in need of help. This civilian force is the key to providing critical engineering capabilities in global stability and reconstruction

operations.

The civilian positions of the 579th are being established in a transition. The 27 civilian positions will eventually be permanently funded on a year-round basis. For the more immediate term, these civilian positions will be staffed on a temporary basis with selected volunteer employees continuing to occupy their normal/permanent assignments during periods of time they are not "activated" or deployed with the 579th, or otherwise assigned for training or meeting purposes.

The leaders of the Vicksburg District and the Mississippi Valley Division are in full support of the FEST-M team. COL Michael C. Wehr, Commander of the Vicksburg District, encourages all employees to consider "stepping up to the challenge of being a part of this historic and expeditionary team of teams to serve our Nation."

BG Michael J. Walsh, Commanding General of MVD has noted, "We have a history of people always ready to take on the most difficult and challenging missions. Without a doubt, the men and women of the Mississippi Valley Division are at the forefront of USACE for taking on tough challenges and going the extra mile. One prime example is that MVD has been a leader for the Corps with volunteers to support the Global War on Terror."



*The Mississippi Board of Levee Commissioners recognized the support of others during the flood in early 2008. Being recognized are the Yazoo Mississippi Delta Joint Water Management District, The Greenville Port Commission, the Greenwood Area Office and the Vicksburg District.*



# Corps posts “help wanted” sign

BY SHIRLEY J. SMITH, PAO

The Vicksburg District is actively hiring in various job categories. The increase in positions is aimed at meeting current and future regional mission requirements.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages a wide variety of missions from navigation to flood damage reduction to recreation. Most of the hiring is for engineering disciplines.

“However, it’s not just engineers we are looking for”, said Lt. Col. Greg Raimondo, Deputy Commander of the District. “We are actively seeking crew members for our fleet of motor vessels, maintenance personnel, contracting specialists, and budget and finance personnel.”

The District’s headquarters building is in Vicksburg, Mississippi, and has field offices in Greenwood, and at lakes Arkabutla, Enid, Grenada, and Sardis, as well as field offices in Monroe and Vidalia, Louisiana, and in Arkansas at lakes Chicot, DeGray, Greeson, and Ouachita.

“The vast majority of the new hires will be engineers. Most of these will be entry level positions. With the increase in the workload, the Region as well as the District, has an excellent opportunity to plan for the future in which a large number of the current workforce will be eligible to retire,” stated John Martin, management analyst with engineering and construction division.

The District is looking at the workforce as a whole to determine the exact mix of positions. While engineering disciplines

directly support our prime mission areas and as such are needed in higher numbers. Administrative positions are vital to maintaining a healthy functioning organization. Since the Vicksburg District is such a large and diverse organization, our normal hiring is about 50 new employees each year just to maintain our capability.

These positions cover the broad spectrum to include park rangers, biologists, natural resource managers, real estate appraisers, deckhands, cooks, accountants, and environmental specialists.

Additionally, the District is taking this opportunity to establish a cadre of potential future new hires by increasing the number of college students hired as cooperative education (co-op) employees. These positions again focus on engineering disciplines, but natural resource management, realty, and environmental disciplines are also included.

Established in 1873, the Vicksburg District is the second oldest business in Vicksburg. The District provides a full range of water resource products and services for our Nation within a 68,000 square-mile area of Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

The District’s team of motivated and dedicated professionals provides engineering services for our Nation’s Civil Works missions supporting the design and construction of civil engineering features of navigation, flood control and other water resources projects throughout Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Civil works missions include flood control, navigation,

hydropower, water supply, recreation, environmental restoration, water quality, and emergency operations within the three-state area of responsibility.

The multi-disciplined team of engineers, planners, and environmental, municipal, and recreation specialists also serve other Federal and state customers in meeting their water resources related requirements. One of the largest civil works Districts in the nation, the Vicksburg District is a center of expertise for many engineering and environmental capabilities. Recent programs established allow us to partner with local agencies and groups to meet their engineering needs.

The District has adequate personnel resources to meet current mission requirements; however, with the large increase in workload scheduled for the Region, Mississippi Valley Division is being proactive in planning for the future. This means of meeting this large increase in workload is in keeping with MVD’s approach to accomplishing work as a Region by leveraging all the multi-faceted resources within the Region to achieve our common goals.

“This workload increase provides an opportunity to provide diverse work to broaden the experience of new engineering employees. It will also establish a cadre of experienced employees ready to fill the “large shoes” of those anticipated to retire over the next 3 to 5 years,” Martin stated.

For more information on Corps jobs or any Federal government jobs go to [www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov) or [www.cpol.army.mil](http://www.cpol.army.mil).

## Volunteering for duty in Iraq —Continued from page 4

“Our job was to start construction on projects once they were awarded at headquarters and see them through to completion.”

For her second tour, Myrick worked as project manager for the Transportation and Communication Sector. “I oversaw all road, bridge, and telecommunication construction projects in Gulf Region South,” she said, describing her work as very rewarding.

“We got to work directly with the Iraq officials, engineers, military brigades, and field offices to develop scopes of work and award projects needed by the Iraqi people,” Myrick explained. “Project managers were involved with the projects from the design phase until the project reached completion.

“Being able to oversee a project from an idea to its actual construction is truly a great feeling,” she added.

Particularly rewarding, Myrick said, was her work on the vocational training center rehabilitation program. She said there



Tonya Myrick, Project Manager,  
USACE, Vicksburg District.

were several votech centers scattered across the GRS area that were barely functioning due to years of neglect by Saddam Hussein.

Rehabbing the centers became a focus of the U.S. Army’s 360th Civil Affairs Brigade, Myrick noted, saying the basic idea was that educating Iraqis in construction trades would help them get jobs and support their families without having to turn to militias for financial aid.

“After the rehabilitation, the centers went from offering one or two classes per semester helping 30-40 students to a curriculum with 20 or more classes involving more than 1,000 students,” Myrick said. “Upon graduation, these students are using their new skills to get steady employment.”

Myrick was also acting program lead for GRS’ civil works and energy sector with a total program value of \$458.7 million.

“So why do we do it?” “

“We’re making a difference in Iraq and it’s great to have been part of this effort,” Myrick concluded.



# Pumps pumped and the system held

Corps Commanders and emergency response teams worked together to analyze, plan and carry out the actions necessary to defend against Hurricane Gustav. Located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Vicksburg, Mississippi, and around the Nation, the Corps pulled together with its partners to form teams for hurricane response.

The Corps' immediate attention was directed at monitoring the effects of the storm as it moved across Louisiana. Hurricane Gustav tested the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS) three years before the system was scheduled to be built to the 100-year level of protection.

The closure gate at Harvey Canal on the West Bank operated as designed. Based on predictive data provided by the Engineering Research and Development Center (ERDC) in Vicksburg, the Mississippi Division Commander gave the order to close the gates at two of the Outfall Canals, London Ave. and 17th Street, to cut off surge from Lake Pontchartrain.

With the gates lowered and locked firmly in place, pumping operations began. The pumps ran for 10 hours, quickly lowering the water in the canals below safe water levels and allowing New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board to effectively operate their pumping stations.

The Environmental Research and Development Center's data predicting the late surge into Lake Pontchartrain after the storm's peak had passed greatly aided the team's planning efforts. This was the first time there had been enough water depth in the canals to operate the pumps in a storm event situation.

During the day, water splashed over the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal West Floodwall. The IHNC West Floodwall, an I-wall that stood up to Hurricane Katrina, has since been buttressed,

armored and improved. Designed to be resilient for minor overtopping, it performed as intended.

In a different area of the IHNC West Floodwall, the Corps, as a flood fight measure, had already pre-positioned sand-filled HESCO baskets to keep flood waters from putting extra pressure on the wall. They worked as planned.

After a non-federal levee at

*With the gates lowered and locked firmly in place, pumping operations began. The pumps ran for 10 hours, quickly lowering the water in the canals below safe water levels and allowing New Orleans Sewerage and Water Board to effectively operate their pumping stations.*

Braithwaite/Scarsdale overtopped in Plaquemines Parish (east bank), the Corps provided technical and engineering assistance and gave clearance to deliver sandbags to the site by driving on the Mississippi River Levee. A non-federal levee breach occurred at Citrus Back in Plaquemines Parish (west bank). The Corps has provided 400 sandbags, about a ton each, to help fill the 150-foot breach.

Corps damage assessment teams had already begun to fly over the system to determine what repairs need to be made. Flight information aided the Chief of Engineers, LTG Van Antwerp, Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh, Commander, Mississippi Valley Division, Karen

Durham-Aguilera, Director, Mississippi Valley Division Forward/Task Force Hope, Col. Al Lee, Commander, New Orleans District, and Col. Jeffrey Bedey, Commander, Hurricane Protection Office. Key state and local leaders such as Gov. Bobby Jindal and other parish representatives also made flight assessments. Repairs were worked in close coordination among the Corps, Federal, state and local leaders in every phase.

During the storm, Col. Lee directed operations from a command bunker in New Orleans. Col. Bedey assisted St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parish. Col. Bedey and team also provided ongoing field assessments as they drove throughout the system.

Karen Durham-Aguilera pulled her Task Force Hope team into the Joint Field Office in Baton Rouge, La., to coordinate with all other agencies and first responders in that office. Team elements also dispersed to Vicksburg to manage all program issues, and to Port Allen, Louisiana to operate a rear Emergency Operations Center.

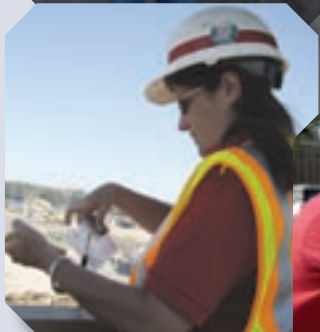
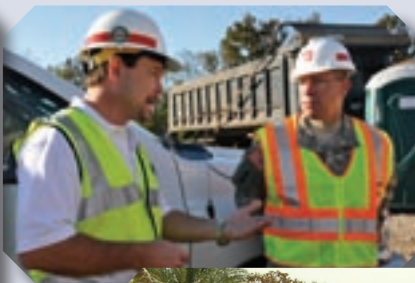
Other teams were located in Rock Island, Illinois, St. Paul, Minn., St. Louis, Mo., Memphis, Tenn., and Washington, D.C. The New Orleans District set up an Alternate Command Post in Vicksburg. All stayed in constant contact using land lines, computers, video conferencing, BlackBerrys, radios and face-to-face communications.

Teams were set up to manage and receive Emergency Support Function Missions as given by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to include water, blue roof, power, damage assessment, unwatering, and debris removal.

"One of the keys to the response's success was that we worked as a team of teams, and we had the right people, in the right places, taking the right actions," said BG Michael Walsh, Commander, Mississippi Valley Division.

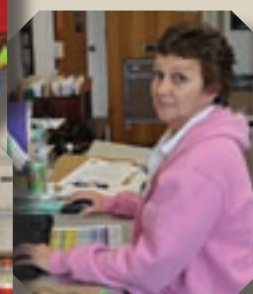
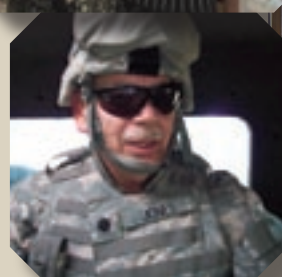
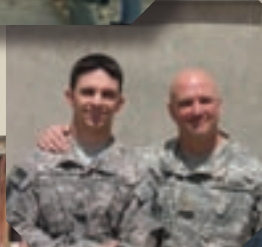
TEAMWORK

# In Honor Of Those Who Deployed...





# THANKS!

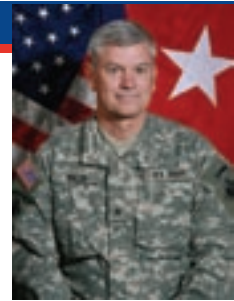


**For a complete listing of those who deployed go to page 14.**



US Army Corps  
of Engineers

# Building Strong for America



BG Michael J. Walsh

I've been talking recently with many people about building a vision for the future of the Mississippi watershed, or what I like to refer to as America's Great River. I spoke at seven public meetings in August during the Mississippi River Commission Low-Water Inspection Trip. I told the 500 people who attended the meetings that oftentimes we must gather the insights and lessons from the past to build a better future.

I have been reading all the history books that numerous stakeholders recommended to me in April during the Commission's High-Water Inspection Trip. As a result of reading those books, I realized we must learn from the past so we can lay the foundation for a new book – a book that will be written by our descendants.

The book will be a history of how we (their ancestors) created a powerful Vision for America's Great River. It is now up to us to start creating the book's first chapter. This summer, I really surprised our stakeholders when I asked them to help us create the 200-year vision. The looks I got back were filled with wonder, as in, "I wonder what the heck he's talking about."

I continued to ask the stakeholders how they would start to write the 200-year vision, and I found that everyone has an interest in some aspect of the river's bounty. Navigation organizations are interested in improving navigation. Flood control groups are interested in improving flood risk reduction. Environmental groups want cleaner water and more sustainable ecosystems. Scientists want to improve their understanding of how rivers thrive, and the folks in Louisiana want to use sediment to rebuild the coastline. The list of good ideas is quite impressive, and we've started gathering the suggestions to build a sustainable vision for the Nation's greatest watershed. Our goal is to look at the entire watershed from a planning perspective and maximize the economic and environmental value of our water resources in a sustainable way.

To truly achieve sustainable development, we've got to use integrated, comprehensive systems-based approaches that include risk-based methods and tools. We must also be cautious and avoid the "Curse of Knowledge." The "Curse of Knowledge" is the burden of already knowing the information you are trying to share with others. Because you already know the information, you cannot put yourself in the shoes of people who are learning the information for the first time. You lack the innocence of "not knowing."

Therefore, you cannot communicate through their perspective, and consequently, cannot reach them where they are now. I urge all of you to start looking for ways we can reach people from their "not knowing" viewpoint and begin creating the 200-year vision for America's Greatest River.

Switching topics now to building trust, I believe our successful Hurricane Gustav response will help us regain some of the trust we lost in the aftermath of Katrina. As the Chief said in a recent blog, "Deeds, not words." Regaining more trust will come through the quality of the work we, and our many partners, will do to protect the city from future storms. Indeed, we are rapidly building a stronger hurricane risk reduc-

tion system in New Orleans, and our Gulf Coast recovery work is the Nation's #1 domestic priority. It's always important to remember and communicate that we are reducing risk, not "guaranteeing safety." Everyone must know there is no way to eliminate risk altogether.

Our Congressionally mandated goal is to provide the 100-year level of hurricane storm damage risk reduction in 2011. The Administration and Congress are committed to that goal and have appropriated \$12.85 billion, with over \$4 billion committed and approximately \$2 billion in expenditures to date. We've repaired or replaced 220 miles of levees and floodwalls, and we've made other additions to strengthen and improve the system. As you could see during the numerous television reports, the IHNC floodwall withstood Gustav's fury. Our work made a difference and helped to prevent further destruction to a great American city.

Now here's the really encouraging news from New Orleans. More than 900 people showed up for a recent job fair hosted by the New Orleans District. The job seekers showed up in business dress, with resumes in hand, wanting to work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. If it can happen in New Orleans, it can happen all over the Corps. And that brings me to my final topic—building a stronger bench.

You already know the Chief of Engineers is urging every Corps employee to make a shift in thinking, from "good" to "GREAT." We've also got the Chief's challenge to shift our thoughts, words, and actions to elevate and expand our thinking and performance. I know that I'm working on elevating my thinking regarding the creation of a vision for the Mighty Mississippi watershed, and I hope you will join me in that effort.

Also, that shift in thinking should inspire all of us to create an even stronger organization by encouraging the best possible people – people willing to work tirelessly for the betterment of our Nation and our world – to come work for the Corps. If you've seen your Outlook inbox lately, you know that many good and experienced folks are retiring. We are fortunate that many qualified people are ready to move up from within the organization, but we must also go outside the Corps to find that great talent out there that can help us with our huge workload that I don't foresee getting smaller anytime soon.

One of the best ways we can bring the best people to the Corps is to share our compelling vision for the future with them, thus granting them the power to help create lasting change. These are exciting times, and we can offer a wonderful career to America's best talent.

Our remaining charge is clear – get this GREAT Mississippi Valley Team of disciplined people moving forward with disciplined thought and action to solve the Region's water resources and engineering challenges. Together, we will continue to add value to our Nation by Building Strong!

Essayons!

Michael J. Walsh, Brigadier General,



## New life jacket policy aims to save lives at Corps lakes in Mississippi

BY CODY SCRUGGS

The four Corps lakes in North Mississippi will be participating in a 3-year mandatory life jacket wear test program beginning May 22, 2009. The areas selected for this study are Arkabutla Lake, Enid Lake, Grenada Lake, and Sardis Lake.

The policy will require the use of life jackets to a greater degree than existing regulations in an effort to save lives.

The Corps' mandatory life jacket test program was designed to determine whether the additional life jacket requirements will improve wear rates among water-based recreation user groups and consequently decrease water-related fatalities.

After extensive review, the national data indicated public fatalities most often

occur in accidents involving small classes of vessels (under 26 feet) and swimmers in non-designated swim areas. With all of this in mind, the following life jacket wear requirements were developed:

- All persons must wear a Type I, II, or III US Coast Guard-approved life jacket at all times while swimming outside of designated swimming areas. (Waivers may be issued by park managers to exempt participants of special events, such as triathlons, from this requirement while participating in the event.)
- All persons must wear a Type I, II, or III US Coast Guard-approved life jacket at all times while skiing or being pulled by a vessel, regardless of vessel length.
- All persons must wear a Type I, II, or III US Coast Guard-approved life jacket on powered vessels 16 feet in length to 26 feet in length whenever under power by

the main propulsion unit. (This does not include when the vessel is powered by a trolling motor or is stationary.)

- All persons must wear a Type I, II, or III US Coast Guard-approved life jacket at all times on powered vessels less than 16 feet in length or on non-powered vessels, regardless of length. (Non-powered vessels include, but are not limited to canoes, kayaks, flat bottoms/johnboats, sailboats and paddleboats.)

The new requirements will be in full effect beginning May 22, 2009 on the waters of Arkabutla Lake, Sardis Lake, Enid Lake, and Grenada Lake. For more information, you may contact the Mississippi Project Management Office at (662) 578-3873 or the lake field offices: Arkabutla Lake (662) 562-6261, Sardis Lake (662) 563-4531, Enid Lake (662) 563-4571, or Grenada Lake (662) 226-5911.



LTC Gray at a Black History Month Program.

BY SHIRLEY J. SMITH, PAO

Retired Lt. Col. Leo R. Gray recently accepted an offer to pilot a P-51 Mustang fighter aircraft from Fort Myers to Boca Raton, Florida. He also accepted an offer to speak at a Black History Month Program in Vicksburg at the Corps' Engineer Research and Development Center, presented by the 412th Engineer Command.

Gray is one of the group of 932 trailblazing Tuskegee Airmen who trained at the Army Air Corps' Tuskegee Air Field in Alabama.

During his speech, Gray, now 80 years of age, stated that when he graduated from high school at the age of 18, weighing about 133 and never having driven a car, he enlisted into the Military.

He went to Keesler Air Force Base at Biloxi for 30 days of training, from Keesler he went to Tuskegee for flight training. Although he states that he had no interest at the time in flying a plane, he soon learned that neither was he interested in

## Tuskegee Airman guest speaker at 412th Engineer Command's Black History Month Program

Photos by Alfred Dulaney



LTC Gray addresses the crowd at ERDC

the type work that was offered to Blacks during those days. He stated that there was total segregation during the training of the Tuskegee Airmen from 1941-1945. "It was difficult times, different than it is today. We were treated as second-class citizens; many deeds required of us were dehumanizing, while we were only trying to be citizens of this country," Gray stated.

The Tuskegee Airmen were a group of dedicated, determined young men who enlisted to become America's first black military airmen, at a time when many thought that Black men lacked intelligence, skill, courage, and patriotism to do so.

They became America's first and only all-black aviators, and flew 15,000 plus combat missions during World War II in defense of this country.

A Boston native, Gray was one of the last groups of Tuskegee Airmen to join the war effort in Europe. Although history has not publicized the legacy and fighting spirit the airmen displayed in their war efforts, Gray gladly tells the story.

"We managed to destroy or damage 409 enemy aircraft; we managed to destroy 111 aircraft in aerial combat and we lost 12. A 10-1 ratio is not bad for guys who aren't supposed to be able to fly," Gray stated.

In March 2007, President George W. Bush presented The Congressional Medal of Freedom to the Tuskegee Airmen.

Citing differences from the time he was in the Military and now, Gray stated, "I was fortunate enough to be invited to the Inauguration of the 44th President, Barack Obama. There were 10 bus loads of Tuskegee Airmen, with police patrol, going to the Inauguration, and that was indeed an honor."

In closing remarks at the program, Col David Hollands, Chief of Command, 412th Engineer Command, stated, "If the Tuskegee Airmen had fallen down on their faces, you wouldn't be hearing about them, and LTC (Ret) Gray would not be here today. But, they exceeded all expectations and broke down barriers. To overcome obstacles, do more than is expected of you."

Gray was asked if he had it to do all over again, would he do it.

He responded, "Amen. It was a good experience, we did the right thing at the right time, and things blossomed."

## PROJECTS

# Corps and Partners plug Denny Drain

BY: FRANK WORLEY, CHIEF, PAO  
PHOTOS BY: ALFRED DULANEY

The first phase of a joint effort to plug a washout at Denny Drain in the Larto Lake area in east central Louisiana has been completed. During the initial effort, water stopped flowing at Denny Drain off the Catahoula Diversion Canal.

Water had been exiting through the area that had been overtopped as a result of the more than 20 inches of rain brought by Hurricane Gustav.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's assigned mission to repair the drain was a cooperative effort among the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, who manage Larto Lake, the Louisiana National Guard, which provided helicopters and ground personnel, and the Vicksburg District, which provided sand bags and technical assistance.

The work was phase one of a two phase plan to fix the problem. Phase Two will include a sheet pile cutoff wall flanked by stone rip rap further upstream where erosion is less likely to occur.

Approximately 160 sand bags, weighing about 3,000 pounds each, along with borrow material from an adjacent site were used to fill in the washout. The Louisiana National Guard used three Blackhawk helicopters to drop the bags into place.

*Helicopter carries sandbag to Denny Drain.*



*Above: Waters from Hurricane Gustav washed out areas of Larto Lake.*

*Left: Guardsmen fill sandbags to be placed at Denny Drain.*



*Helicopter picks up sandbag to be transported to Denny Drain.*

*Helicopter drops sandbag at washed out area of Larto Lake.*



## Thanks to you who served *continued from pages 10-11*

Emerson, Samuel JR.  
Evans, Steven L.  
Gallup, Mickey A.  
Goeggle, Sandra F.  
Gonzales, Miguel M.  
Harper, James T.  
Matthews, Thomas W.  
McFarland, Joseph D.  
Reid, Derrell G.  
Smith, Vernon C. JR.  
Tullos, Max E.  
Williamson, Willie W.  
Zeigler, Howard L.  
Quimby, Casey  
Kimbrough, Charles  
Huskey, Perry  
Woodward, Chris  
Leeper, Mike  
Rider, Ronald  
Boothe, Kenneth  
Nobles, Roger  
Merchant, Craig  
Walters, Alton  
Price, Darrell  
Adams, William R.  
Baine, Tammy L.  
Bell, David A.  
Horton, Samuel J.  
Jenkins, Edward JR  
Keene, Paul A. JR  
Kerr, John T. JR.  
Overstreet, Jason T.  
Saffold, Edward  
Stout, Michael L.  
Tuberville, James R.  
Wiltshire, Howard JR.

Staples, Adam  
Mitchell, William  
Waters, John  
Hammitte, Alphonse  
Johnson, George  
Fletcher, VJ  
Coldiron, Jimmy  
Stokes, Bobby  
Nobles, Roger  
Booth, Kenneth  
Rider, Ronald  
Kimbrough, Charles  
Gibbs, Malcolm  
Thomas, Woodrow  
Driggers, Barry  
Waites, Richard  
Wallace, Ernest  
Jennings, Willie  
Bailey, Calvin  
Kirkwood, Jimmy  
Williams, Julius  
Martin, Dale  
Ernest Stone  
Wilks, Louis  
Lewis, Neal  
McRaney, Curtis  
Jeff Artman  
Pete Montalbano  
Mickey Lee  
Cissy Killgo  
Mike O'Neal  
Lance Gullett  
Robert Standley  
Jeff Maxey  
Eddie Miller

Gartman, Jared  
Pigott, Carl  
Constancio, Cynthia  
Smith, Pam  
Steen, Sue  
Fant, Tammy  
Baine, Tammy  
Strider, Jessica  
Hughes, Donna  
Parker, Jenny  
Ahlvin, Alder  
Morgan, Paul  
Tomlinson, Andrew  
Mattingly, Walter  
Seal, Michael  
Green, Robert  
Boone, Jonathan  
Metts, Andy  
Bufkin, Alice  
Worley, Frank  
Smith, Shirley  
Barfield, Lanny  
Ross, Kirk  
Smith, Jack  
Benjamin, Samuel  
Jenkins, Eric  
Ronald Goldman  
Robert Simrall  
Basil Arthur  
John Smith  
Phil Dye  
Tommy Brown  
Ray Wilson  
Robert Stubbs  
Joey Windham

Norma Walker  
Wayland Hill  
Tim Rodgers  
Charlie Mckinnie  
Mark Richter  
Terry Temple  
Ron Brannon  
Michael Warren  
Helen Butler  
Michael Sorrels  
Tim Graham  
Ricky Fulcher  
Gabe Harris  
Jennifer Chambers  
Robert Hite  
Chad Bounds  
Jason Mooney  
Hitchcock, Al  
Eckhardt, Cody  
Guerrero, Bobbilynn  
Woerner, Eric  
Sims, Jay  
Martin, Brad  
Hardy, Andy  
Emerson, Miriam  
Stacy, Sam  
Woodward, Chris  
Mendrop, Chuck  
Forrest, Wayne  
White, Ken  
Gray, Dane  
Wallace, Rodger  
Mayfield, Bill  
Chennault, Ken  
Mathews, William



## Buckville Church, a landmark-Lake Ouachita-before and after

BY GREG CLEMONS

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RANGER UPDATE

Flea Bend, Possum Kingdom, Muse, and Buckville at one time were among the many thriving small towns in the valleys on the Ouachita River. Poor farm families tilling the hard scrabble soil in the valleys on the Ouachita River trying to survive on its banks. Families came and went with the ebb and flow of the meandering river.

Modern civilization was something to dream of as these were considered "back-woods" folks-poor in regards to material things but rich otherwise. Buckville was one of the largest of these few towns, and still survives to this day, though not in its original location.

Established sometime in the mid-1800's, it began to grow at first as a general store, and then eventually a post office was built in the town. By 1884 at least five doctors called Buckville home. Sometime between this date and 1890, an exact date is not known as records were lost in a fire, Buckville Church was born. It served not only as a church but also as a school where students in grades 1-8 were taught.

By 1920, the town had grown to near bursting proportions and was considered the largest town in Montgomery County as it supported three general stores, a hotel, a grist mill, a sawmill, a two-room school-house and the Brown Telephone Company.

But the times-they were a changing; Arkansas Power and Light was in the process



of building the first in a series of dams on the Ouachita River in the vicinity of Hot Springs National Park which was located many miles downstream. Word was they were going to build the next dams up river from the first.

This began the death knell for the small river communities as families began packing and moving to the bigger towns to be close to the new jobs that always came with dam building. The big depression hit and more families moved away but the folks in Buckville hung on. A new war in Europe began and still the people of Buckville stayed. Arkansas Power and Light had finished their second dam a few years prior to the outbreak of the war. The land was being bought and plans being drawn for the third and final dam.

At the beginning of the war all work ceased with the stockholders voting to wait until after the fighting was done. World War II brought a change that few expected; the Flood Control Act of 1944, which allowed the government to step in and take over public works projects such as dams. The people of Buckville knew this would spell doom for their way of life on the river, as the govern-

ment began in earnest to acquire the lands needed to build the third and final lake that Arkansas Power and Light

envisioned. Land was bought or condemned for the public good. Those in arrears on taxes watched as the lands their families were born and buried on were taken away.

Homes and farm buildings were torn down, majestic timber fell and burned, roads and railways diverted to higher ground, graves were dug up and bodies reburied elsewhere all in preparation of the flooding waters soon to arrive. The Ouachita River that once gave life to so many, would soon become the cause for their despair.

As the waters rose, the people of Buckville were determined to save something of their community, something that had given them shelter from the toil and heartbreak through the years. The Buckville Church was that perfect something that had stood for so many years at the center of their lives. The church members raised the money needed to move the building to higher ground, much higher ground as this was going to be the largest lake in the entire state.

The last and closing service was held

*Continued on page 16*



## Enid Lake hosts Fishing Day for the physically challenged

BY CHRIS HANNAFORD

The Corps and the Chickasaw Hill Volunteer Association held the 17th Annual Physically Challenged Fishing day at Chickasaw Hill Recreation Area. Thirty-two physically challenged individuals ranging from young children to older adults turned out for the event. More than 50 volunteers along with more than 100 friends and family members also attended the event.

The day was favored with great weather and fellowship. Everyone enjoyed a beautiful morning of fishing that was followed by a fabulous fish fry and the awarding of door prizes.

The Chickasaw Hill Volunteer Association along with residents from the local community provided pontoons boats, bait, and poles for the fishing trip, and all the essentials for a Class A fish fry.

During the event volunteers not only provided boats, fishing equipment and food for the fish fry, but they assisted participants in loading and unloading boats, fishing, and preparing lunch.

Many participants for this event came from surrounding states and are contacted through agencies such as the Veterans Hospital Memphis, Baptist Memorial Rehabilitation Center-Memphis, Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities-Tupelo, and the Methodist Rehabilitation Center, Jackson.

This event is held annually to give individuals who do not have the opportunity every day, a chance to enjoy the great outdoors along with one of the most enjoyed recreational sports—fishing.



*Family members of physically challenged persons also enjoy day of fishing.*



*Volunteers assist the physically challenged onto boat for a day of fishing.*

## Lakes Ouachita and DeGray host job shadowing for local schools

Ouachita Project Office biologist Johnny Cantrell, along with DeGray Lake Field Office personnel hosted the annual Sparkman Schools Shadowing program. This career orientation program enables eighth grade students a first hand introduction to the Corps of Engineers' Recreation Resource Management Program.

The program was highlighted by presentations and practical exercises with respect to mission essential business functions that included visitor assistance, interpretive outreach, geographic information system, forestry and natural resources management practices and policies.

Arlene Goza, career orientation teacher, at Sparkman Schools stated, "My career orientation class has been job shadowing the Corps for the last five years. Each year, Mr. Cantrell and everyone at DeGray Lake have been extremely helpful and always excited to allow my students to job shadow."

"Over the years we have seen more and more high school and college students expressing an interest in natural resource management," stated Johnny Cantrell, a 33-year Corps veteran.

"Most of my students have never been exposed to careers in this area. After their job shadowing experience, they all come back ready to become a biologist, or park ranger, or just wanting to work at the lake," expressed Ms. Goza.

Assisting with the programming were park rangers Darrell Mitchell, Linda Spradlin and Brian Westfall, along with contractor Leah Davidson. Ranger Mitchell provided an overview of how global positioning system units are being used on the Arkansas lakes to identify locations of fish shelters and to record and measure acreages on wildlife food plots and natural areas.

Ranger Spradlin, visitor assistance program coordinator, explained the ranger's role with respect to interaction with lake visitors. She described to the students that the ranger staff are dedicated stewards of public lands committed to providing a valuable recreational experience for visitors while promoting safe use, and achieving compliance of rules and regulations.

Brian Westfall, interpretive outreach program coordinator, described the role of the interpretive services and outreach program. He relayed the importance of fostering sound relationships with lake visitors, communities, and the news media locally and nationally to achieve management objectives. He also stressed water safety education, which reduces accidents and fatalities on our nation's waterways; the need to work with partners to provide

quality customer care.

"At first, the students who choose to go there are not sure what they will be doing. When they return to school they share their experiences with their classmates and me, they are all excited and love to tell us about everything they learned," Ms. Goza stated.

The students also participated in a practical exercise utilizing field data collected on four deer survey transects from Lake Greeson. They analyzed the data to determine buck-doe ratios, doe-fawn ratios and deer densities. They visited a wildlife opening and learned to identify plant species used by deer, turkey and bobwhite quail.

The students toured the Pakistani Fly nursery ponds and discussed the Pak Fly life cycle and how the larvae has helped to control and stop the spread of the invasive hydrilla plants in lakes DeGray and Ouachita.

The students toured the Pakistani Fly nursery ponds and discussed the Pak Fly life cycle and how the larvae has helped to control and stop the spread of the invasive hydrilla plants in lakes DeGray and Ouachita.

"My students who went the first year, who are now seniors, still talk about how much they learned and enjoyed their job shadowing day with the Corps. The students who job shadowed this year think of something new to tell me about on a daily basis. They enjoyed

learning about food plots, deer surveys, and the flies used to help eradicate the Hydrilla plants, stated Ms. Goza.

"With the renewed emphasis placed on the volunteer program, in addition to the mentoring, STRIVE and shadowing exercises, students today are given the opportunity to see first hand how the Corps' natural resource management program works. This, in turn, has given me a great opportunity to keep in touch with the young people in this part of our state. It affords an opportunity for them to experience the "real" world of natural resource management.

One day, one of these students may be involved in the solving of a natural resource problem created by "Mother Nature's ever changing course," said Cantrell. "Career orientation programming such as the Sparkman Shadowing program is truly the future of the Corps. With a large portion of our workforce nearing retirement, we must replace ourselves with the best and brightest. To me, the best measure of success and ultimately our legacy is to recruit wisely, provide sound leadership, nurture and mentor the next generation of Corps employees to do a better job than we have," proclaimed Ranger Westfall.

Ms. Goza thanked Cantrell and everyone else involved for the time and effort they put into making the job shadowing experience a success.



*Students learned to identify plant species, how to prepare food plots, and about deer surveys while job shadowing at the lakes.*

### **Buckfield Church**—Continued from page 15

December 17, 1950, where a committee was elected to oversee the moving of the church. Church members were gathered, a logging truck was borrowed, large pine logs were cut and laid on the path where the 192-square-foot church would travel on its journey a quarter mile away, and on a sunlit summer day in 1951 the move began.

Buckville church now sits atop a tree covered hill overlooking a bay on Lake Ouachita. The cemetery adjacent to it was also reestablished from its original location. To this day, Buckville Church remains an important part in the lives and memories of many people. It is seen as a landmark in which the "Bucktowners," as they call themselves, can visit and recall the old days before the lake covered the land. These reunions are held in June each year; though sparsely attended at times, in later years several hundred people have attended. An old fashioned dinner on the ground is held afterwards where everyone shares food

and fellowship, meeting new family members and reminiscing.

Buckville Church no longer has a regular Sunday service so a sign was painted and hung on the front of the church to remind all who visited what the building represented.

The sign reads: "Ye Who Take Shelter Here Remember This Is God's House." In September 2007, the church and cemetery were included in the National Register of Historic Places. A descendant of one of the former Buckville residents, Wendy Bradley Richter wrote and published a book in 1990 titled, "They Can't Go Home," which chronicles the history of both families and communities prior to the creation of Lake Ouachita.

Due to the popularity of the book, two printings were sold out and a third printing was requested.

*(Much of the research for this article was obtained from that book).*



## District names Brown chief of Mat Sinking Unit/assistant chief of revetment section

ARKANSAS

**J**oel Brown has recently been named mat sinking unit chief and assistant chief of the revetment section of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Vicksburg District, operations division.

In his new position as the chief of the mat sinking unit (MSU), he will supervise a crew of more than 300 men and women performing seasonal revetment work on the Lower Mississippi River from Cairo, Illinois, to Venice, Louisiana. The MSU consists of a mat sinking plant, quarter boat complex, and the three towboats, Motor Vessels BENYAURD, WILLIAM JAMES, and the HARRISON. The MSU places articulated concrete mattress on the banks of the river to slow erosion, stabilize the navigation channel, and protect levees and property. More than 100 years of experimentation and trials of different methods and materials have gone into the current solution used by the Corps.

Brown earned a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from Mississippi State University.

He began his career with the Vicksburg District in August

2004 as a mechanical engineer on the mat sinking unit. His duties included handling contracts, procurements, and design for the construction, modification, alteration and/or repair of equipment on various items of floating plant such as towboats, crew boats, crane barges, bank equipment, and revetment plant.

He is a member of the Engineer Intern Mississippi Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Surveyors.

Brown is a native of DeKalb, and his parents are Larry and Jan Brown of Dekalb.



Joel Brown

## Huskey receives Operations and Maintenance Castle Award

Perry W. Huskey was recently recognized for his leadership, technical expertise, professionalism and mentorship as chief engineer of the Dredge JADWIN in support of the operations and maintenance program.

He received the Operations and Maintenance Castle Award, Support of Civil Works Infrastructure for FY 2008.

The JADWIN is one of the three dustpan dredges of the Corps, and is responsible for maintenance dredging along the Mississippi River from St. Louis, Missouri, to New Orleans. The JADWIN was built in 1933 as a steam powered vessel. During its 75 years of service to the Corps, it has been repeatedly updated to remain abreast of current technology. Perry Huskey has been instrumental in all major upgrades on the JADWIN.

Huskey began his career with the Vicksburg District as a machinist. He moved to the crew of the JADWIN in the engine room where he soon distinguished himself as a valuable member of the crew. After serving at various positions in the engine room, and working hard to obtain all certification and licenses necessary for chief engineer, he was promoted to chief engineer in 1993.

As chief engineer, Huskey has dedicated his career to making the JADWIN the "Crème of the crop" of the Corps and private industry dredges. He has led a team of marine engineers, technicians, and other crew members to modernize the JADWIN.

His efforts have met the ever changing requirements neces-

sary to provide a navigation channel for the towing industry on the Mississippi River. Huskey's visionary leadership has kept the Dredge JADWIN relevant to the navigation mission of the Mississippi Valley.

Huskey and his wife Christine, have one daughter and two granddaughters.



Perry Huskey, left, is pictured with his wife Christine, and BG Walsh.

# Vicksburg Leadership Development Class devotes to community service

BY HOLLEY PORTER

Photos by Michelle Moore

The members of the 2008 class worked on many projects and activities that gave them great opportunities to interact with the public and other Corps employees. The program offered each member a great opportunity to develop leadership and team building skills. Below are comments from some of the 2008 VLDP class members stating what the Vicksburg Leadership Development Program meant to them.

"VLDP gave me the opportunity to interact with senior staff and understand the many duties that their jobs include. This will help me in my career now and as I strive to become a better leader; because, the 'big picture' is clearer now than it was prior to my VLDP experience." – Michelle Moore

"The VLDP created professional relationships within the District; which are not only beneficial now, but these connections will prove priceless as graduates rise to leadership positions within the District. Communication barriers among organizations will be breached, thus leading to a better overall process and subsequently a better product." – Aaron Matthews



Aaron Matthews and Jennifer Mallard lend a helping hand by painting at Good Samaritan Community Center.

"Becoming a member of the VLDP enabled me to speak in front of groups-putting my inhibitions aside. It taught me that team work is so important and is needed in every facet of life." – Beverly Zeigler

"The District's Leadership Development Program has enhanced my leadership capabilities. Observing District leaders and working with others in the class have afforded me invaluable insight regarding the importance of team work." – Tabitha Sims

"The greatest value I received from being a part of the VLDP 2008 class was the building of friendships through team growth. These team members are the future leaders of The District and the USACE organization as well as good friends." – Brandy Alexander

"VLDP provided me with training as well as practical experiences and exercises that have been of tremendous value in my leadership development. I believe the relationships I have formed not only with my VLDP classmates but also with the District's leadership have been invaluable and will continue to be beneficial for years to come." – Holly Porter

"Throughout the VLDP experience I have interacted with other District employees and learned more about the various Corps programs and opportunities, outside of my normal duties. The insight gained through this interaction has served a desire to be more involved and better understand the overall District dynamics. The VLDP experience is one that I would recommend for other employees interested in self-assessment of abilities, teamwork, and personal growth." – Jennifer Mallard



Matt Mallard, Jacob Brister, and Brandy Alexander work at Catfish Row assisting with the building of a playground.

## Deserving Student Receives MWRA Scholarship

SPECIAL FROM PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

As in the previous five years, the Mississippi Water Resources Association has given an award/scholarship to a deserving high school student. The award has increased from a mere plaque and \$100.00 to the present \$1,000. This award was initiated by former executive director of MWRA, Margie Tyler, and continues with the present director, Dr. Deirdre McGowan.

This year the scholarship was sponsored by SSA Mobile out of Mobile, Alabama. It was named after its founder and longtime advocate of Gulf Coast commerce Cpt. Robert Engram. The 2008 award recipient was Ann Ashton Jones, a senior at Vicksburg High School. The award was presented to Jones based upon her outstanding academic record, service to her school and community, and her enthusiasm shown in the study of the Mississippi River.

**18 THE WATER'S EDGE**



Present for the presentation of the award were left to right, Carmen Engram, Steve Doring Services of America, Jones, Carlton Melton, SSA, Col Wehr, and Doug Jones, father of Ann Jones.



## Retiree Profile-Louis Sullivan

Retirement has afforded me the opportunity to spend more time with my family, be even more active with my church, and more time to help others.

My wife and I have three sons and a daughter, eight grandchildren, and one great grandchild. My plan was to travel more but I haven't traveled as much as I would like to because my wife is still working, and is not considering retirement.

After I retired I was selected as "the Family Courier" for picking up my grandchildren from school. Sometimes I still do, and we go to McDonald's, Wendy's, and wherever else they want to go, sometimes they inform me of places that are not familiar to me. The children's mothers fuss with me about taking them wherever they want to eat, but I figure that is a part of being a granddad.

Also during that first year my wife had a "Honey-Do" list, which took me about a year to complete. I enjoyed doing those chores, and still do because this work is different than the work at the District. I work when I want to, work some now, work some later, get more rest by taking naps in between working chores.

I like to cook barbecue and invite the children and grands for dinner. My wife and I do that sometimes- cook for the children and grands and tell them to come on over. This is always a fun time, and it is quality time spent with the family. I just do whatever they request of me whether it is running errands, picking up grandchil-

dren, giving advice or whatever.

I have become even more active with my church, King Solomon Baptist, where I serve as a deacon and was awarded Deacon Chairman Emeritus on July 29, 2007. The church will soon be 150 years old, and is led by a young energetic pastor. My pastor keeps me busy; sometimes I have to remind him that I am not as young as he is, and that he needs to slow down because he is younger than some of my children. However, I thoroughly enjoy working with my church. In January I retired as the church's administrator and now have a slower pace and am learning to enjoy the rest of life's journey.

For the first two years of my retirement I felt like I was on vacation: I watched a lot of television, drove a lot—here and there...until the price of gas increased. I still plan to do more traveling, purchase or rent a RV and travel across the country. The price of gas will not be a factor because this is something that I really want to do.

One day I received a call from Central Mississippi Prevention Services offering me a job to serve as an administrative assistant for them. My duties included seeking sites for a summer camp for the youth activities, and observing students in the classrooms, and I solicited sponsors for



summer camp scholarships.

Now, I work three nights per week as a psychiatric technician for Warren Yazoo Mental Health. I really enjoy this job although it requires a lot of training, but it is interesting and worthwhile.

I have been very busy with community events with the American Legion.

I have coordinated parades for Memorial Day, Veterans Day and facilitated the Oratorical Contests. Being a Vietnam Era Vet myself, I always committed to assuring veterans would be treated fairly, with dignity and with respect.

I have also done volunteer services at the Community Storehouse Food Pantry by collecting canned goods from schools and other businesses, and serving as a stocker when needed.

Due to the fact that I have been so busy since I retired, my advice to others considering retirement is to be sure that you have something to keep you busy, keep you active. This gives you a sense of worth, especially if you do something to help others.

I like to travel, fish, cook and listen to old music. As I stated earlier I haven't traveled as much as I plan to; I have been fishing twice, but have done a lot of cooking.

My wife and I have been married for 43 years now, which is a blessing. We both have had surgeries since my retirement, so with her being a Registered Nurse, I have learned a lot about nursing and have had to execute my nursing skills as well.

## Water safety personnel receive intensive training and education

STORY COURTESY OF RANGER UPDATE

**P**ark rangers with the District's lake field offices converged on Sardis Lake June 28-29 for a water safety saturation. Often called a "blitz," these saturation weekends require personnel and resources for intensive water safety education and enforcement efforts at a particular project. A total of 22 park rangers and five patrol boats were deployed at Sardis for the event.

Their mission was to make as many personal contacts as possible, increase awareness of water safety issues, and enforce compliance with our rules and regulations.

The chosen dates were hot and windy, which created challenges for both rangers and lakers alike.

There was plenty of work to be done; boat crews patrolled both the upper and lower lakes performing vessel safety checks, and contacting visitors along the shore. Teams of rangers ashore inspected boats launching at the ramps and worked swimming areas and campgrounds as well.

Approximately 2,135 water safety contacts were made and more than 323 vessels inspected. Rangers also responded to boater distress calls, performed numerous beach safety equipment demos and distributed boating and water safety promo items by the

box full.

A big factor in the success of the blitz was close cooperation with the Mississippi conservation officers who patrol Sardis Lake to enforce Mississippi's boating laws. These officers fully committed to the saturation, coordinating their own activities to support the event and providing assistance throughout the weekend.

It was also a great opportunity for rangers from across the District to meet, share their experience and work together as a team. Rangers found themselves paired with unfamiliar partners and only had a short time to get acquainted.

## CUSTOMER CARE

### District Field Offices & Services

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District**  
**4155 E. Clay Street**  
**Vicksburg, MS 39183**  
**www.mvk.usace.army.mil**  
**email: cemvk-pa@army.us.mil.**

Lake Ouachita	(501) 767-2101
Lake Greeson	(870) 285-2151
DeGray Lake	(870) 246-5501
Sardis Lake	(662) 563-4531
Arkabutla Lake	(662) 562-6261
Enid Lake	(662) 563-4571
Grenada Lake	(662) 226-5911
Bayou Bodcau	(318) 322-6391
JBj Waterway	(318) 322-6391
Ouachita-Black Rivers	(318) 322-6391
Golden Age Passports	(601) 631-5287
Aerial Photography	(601) 631-5709
Corps Wetland Permits	(601) 631-5289

*Apply, ask questions, or report violations*

Contracting & Bids	(601) 631-7706
<i>Vendors, status of bids, specs</i>	

Community Support	(601) 631-5223
<i>Tours, speakers, volunteers</i>	

Historical Questions & Research	(601) 634-7023
<i>Mississippi River History Center</i>	

Real Estate Issues	(601) 631-5220
<i>Corps impacts to your property</i>	

Employment Questions	(601) 631-5859
<i>Vacancies, status, qualifications</i>	

Historical Photographs	(601) 631-5020
Environmental	(601) 631-5410

### Other Vicksburg Engineer/ Federal Organizations:

Mississippi Valley Division  
(601) 634-5760

Engineer Research & Development  
Center  
(601) 634-2504

412th Engineer Command  
(601) 636-1686

168th Engineer Group  
(601) 313-5290

Vicksburg National Military Park  
(601) 636-0583

U. S. Coast Guard Cutter Kickapoo  
(601) 636-8304

U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Ecological Services  
(601) 629-6607

U. S. Army Recruiter  
(601) 638-1203

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Vicksburg District C/PAO  
4155 Clay Street  
Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

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